

White fir trees cut for Christmas season

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With Halloween now a glint in ghoulish memory, local cities and even the state Capitol in Sacramento have turned to Shasta County to help ring in the winter holidays.

Three trees felled in the eastern stretches of the county in recent days are now on their way to being festive centerpieces in Redding, Anderson and Sacramento.

This year's haul was exclusively white fir trees cut on state and private forest lands.

The two behemoths that will tower above Anderson and Redding were cut Sunday on Sierra Pacific Industries property near Viola. Anderson's tree was set in the Gateway Shopping Center on Balls Ferry Road near Interstate 5, and Redding's evergreen stands in its traditional location atop the California Street parking garage.

A nearly 70-foot white fir was cut from the depths of the LaTour Demonstration State Forest near Whitmore on Monday, destined for Sacramento. The 4,800-pound giant will be hauled to the west lawn of Capitol Park on 10th Street between N and L streets in Sacramento on Tuesday, complete with an escort from the California Highway Patrol.

"There are quite a few beautiful trees up there, and it really offers the best selection," said Brian Ferguson, a spokesman with the state's Department of General Services in Sacramento. "They're really picky about what's going to fit on the truck and what's going to look the best."

Ferguson said the state had turned to Shasta County for its annual Christmas tree since the mid-2000s. This year's tree will be lit by 10,000 low-wattage LED bulbs when flipped on during a lighting ceremony Dec. 2.

Anderson and Redding will have separate lighting ceremonies.

Redding's tree may already be in place but will not light the night sky until the Winter Festival on the evening of Dec. 5. Brandon Bretnig with Viva Downtown said the event will feature musical performances, speakers and the tree lighting ceremony, and additional details would soon be available.

Can't stand to wait? The Anderson Fire Protection District will be out decorating the town's tree Tuesday morning starting at about 8:30 a.m., and the lights will go on the day after Thanksgiving, Nov. 28. Santa Claus may also make an early appearance at the lighting ceremony.

Anderson Fire spokesman Steve Lowe said it had become a welcome tradition over the past decades that the Fire Department was happy to help organize.

A host of local companies helped bring home the Anderson and Redding trees, including Redding Electric Utility, Viva Downtown, Anderson Fire Protection District, Anderson Kiwanis, Headrick Logging and Dura Crane Inc.

Caption: Cal Fire/Contributed Photo Cal Fire officials cut an approximately 70-foot white fir tree in the LaTour Demonstration State Forest on Monday. The Christmas tree will be placed on the west lawn of Capitol Park in Sacramento.